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Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Letter dated 26 April 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the texts of a decision by the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of Independent States and of a statement by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States on the inadmissibility of discrimination and intolerance against Christians, Muslims and adherents of other faiths (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a Security Council document and as a document of the General Assembly, under item 66 of the agenda.

(*Signed*) P. **Iliichev**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 26 April 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Decision of 7 April 2017 adopted in the city of Tashkent by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States on the inadmissibility of discrimination and intolerance against Christians, Muslims and adherents of other faiths

The Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of Independent States hereby decides:

1. To adopt the statement by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States on the inadmissibility of discrimination and intolerance against Christians, Muslims and adherents of other faiths (see enclosure).

2. To request the Russian Federation, as the State chairing the Commonwealth of Independent States, to transmit the text of the statement to the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other international organizations.

For the Republic of Armenia (*Signed*)

For the Azerbaijani Republic (*Signed*)

For the Republic of Belarus (*Signed*)

For the Republic of Kazakhstan (*Signed*)

For the Kyrgyz Republic (*Signed*)

For the Republic of Moldova (*Signed*)

For the Russian Federation (*Signed*)

For the Republic of Tajikistan (*Signed*)

For Turkmenistan

For Ukraine

For the Republic of Uzbekistan (*Signed*)

Enclosure

Statement by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States on the inadmissibility of discrimination and intolerance against Christians, Muslims and adherents of other faiths

The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States,

Taking into account the relevant international norms of human rights enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and other international instruments,

Confirming the right of every person to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, and also the equality of all persons regardless of their attitude to religion,

Noting that any form of discrimination on the basis of religious affiliation or beliefs constitutes a violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms and that every crime motivated by hatred against religion or beliefs, xenophobia and intolerance must be firmly and equally condemned, and also that all persons must be accorded equal protection before the law,

Expressing concern about continuing manifestations of intolerance, violence and terrorist acts motivated by religious affiliation or beliefs,

1. *Declare* that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, including the freedom to adhere to, or adopt, the religion or beliefs of one's choice, and also not to adhere to or practise any religion, to change one's religion or beliefs, and to practise one's religion or expound beliefs both individually, and together with others, publicly or privately, through study, worship, and performance of traditional religious and ritual ceremonies and exercises, provided that such actions do not violate the rights of other people and do not contravene the national legislation and international obligations of the States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States,

2. *Confirm* their resolve to uphold human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief for everyone without distinction as to race, ethnic origin, gender, language or religion, as well as the need to pursue a policy of inculcating respect for places of worship and religious sites, monuments, cemeteries and shrines, and also protecting them from vandalism and destruction,

3. *Call upon* political, religious and social leaders to continue to work to prevent and counteract intolerance and discrimination against Christians, Muslims and adherents of other faiths, with full respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights,

4. *Note* the importance of promoting mutual tolerance and respect among people practising different religions and not practising them, and among religious organizations of different denominations, and the inadmissibility of religious and other fanaticism and extremism, and of actions aimed at sowing discord, exacerbating relations and inciting hatred between different faiths,

5. *Firmly condemn* all manifestations of intolerance, discrimination, violence and terrorist acts, and also use of the language of hatred in relation to Christians, Muslims and adherents of other faiths,

6. *Declare* that terrorist acts perpetrated by individuals or groups in the name of particular religions or beliefs can never serve as justification for intolerance against individuals on grounds of their religious affiliation,

7. *Consider* the association of terrorism and violent extremism with any particular religion to be absolutely unacceptable,

8. *Express concern* about the increasing number of incidents directed against Christians, Muslims and adherents of other faiths in various regions of the world, including acts of intolerance, discrimination, prejudice and violence, as well as hate crimes, which constitute a threat to stability and security,

9. *Note* the special role of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, which has become an effective platform for global inter-religious dialogue on the prevention and counteracting of intolerance and discrimination on religious grounds,

10. *Resolve* to continue to make efforts to consolidate the position of the international community on the issue of the inadmissibility of discrimination against Christians, Muslims and adherents of other faiths, in particular at the international human rights bodies of the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe.